

**REMARKS**

A status identifier for canceled claims 1 – 16 is now included in the listing of the claims. The brief remarks below are substantially the same as the remarks presented in the Amendment filed on January 14, 2004, and are reproduced here for the Examiner's convenience.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 29.

Claims 17 – 35 are amended to clarify the claim language. No new matter is introduced.

The dependencies of claims 19 – 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, and 30 – 35 have been corrected. Claims 19 – 21 depend from claim 17. Claim 23 depends from claim 22. Claim 25 depends from claim 24. Claims 27 and 28 depend from claim 26. Claims 30 and 32 depend from claim 29. Claim 31 depends from claim 30. Claims 33 – 35 depend from claim 18.

Claims 17, 18, 22, 24, and 26 are amended to resolve the antecedent basis issues raised by the Examiner.

Claim 22 as amended now explicitly defines the respective relationships between the whole backside surface, the semiconductor wafer, and the wafer holding means. As recited in the claim, the whole backside surface is a part of the semiconductor wafer. The whole backside surface of the wafer is in face to face contact with the wafer holding means.

In view of the foregoing, the application is respectfully submitted to be in condition for allowance, and prompt favorable action thereon is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #029368.50674).

Respectfully submitted,

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